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A radio talk by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture Period, National Farm and Home Hour, Tuesday, March 1, 1932, over a network of 47 associate NBC radio stations. U. S. Department of Agriculture

According to the calendar March 20th will be the official beginning of Spring. When I went out into my garden this morning the birds were singing, daffodils and violets were blooming. In fact, many of the spring flowering shrubs and plants are in bloom here. It is rather significant that the buds of fruit trees are still comparatively dormant but roses and some of the ornamental shrubs are showing considerable green foliage. I have had many local telephone calls from people who are very much concerned about the way their rose bushes are advancing and, naturally, they want to know what they can do about it. There is really nothing they can do except, perhaps have some old rugs or sheets of heavy paper on hand to wrap around a few of their favorite plants in case we do have a decided drop in temperature. Some of the most enthusiastic gardeners around here are planting early potatoes, beets, onions, radishes, peas and the like. My neighbors, knowing my gardening enthusiasm, seem surprised that I have not planted my whole garden, but I'm like the old German gardener I once knew, who said "Vell nebbly I wait til it varm oop a leetle."

No matter if you live in the South where gardens are already well started, or in the North where there is still frost in the ground, there's always plenty that can be done around the home and in the home orchard and garden. If you have not already done so now is a good time for you northern gardeners to put a coating of compost on your garden, and perhaps a little of it would not harm your fruits and berries. I have on several occasions called your attention to the importance of winter or dormant spraying for the control of scale insects on fruit trees. I'll admit that with fruit selling at low prices there is not much incentive to get out the old sprayer, put it in working condition, and put on a spray of lime sulphur or oil emulsion, but if you want to grow fruit that is fit either for home use or to sell you must spray to protect your trees from insects. Later you will have to spray the fruit to protect it from both diseases and insects. I am not going to attempt to give you a spray schedule, but your local county agricultural agent can give you directions from his handbook or you can get specific directions from your own State College or Experiment Station.

Are you going to plant any berries or small fruits this spring? If so, lose no time in arranging for your plants, and be sure that you get plants that are guaranteed to be reasonably free from diseases. Strawberries grow almost everywhere and I believe it pays to have a patch of strawberries in the farm garden. I doubt the advisability of planting strawberries in the very small garden. Raspberries are good for growing in the home garden in regions where they do well but they have their limitations. For example, the Van Fleet, a red variety, is about the only one that will do anything in the South. Raspberries do well in the north central belt but only the most hardy varieties can be grown in the Dakotas and other extremely cold sections.

You folks who live in the South will get best results from dewberries and I might mention the new Young dewberry, or Youngberry, which was orig-

inated in the South. This variety is not hardy in the North, in fact it will winterkill here at Washington most winters. Blackberries can be grown over a big area from the New England States and Southern New York to northern Georgia and west to eastern Kansas and Northeastern Texas. Blackberries grow wild over a large part of this region but it really pays to grow the cultivated or named varieties.

Now folks, a few words about lawns may be in order for in many sections it is time to be replanting and reseeding lawns in order to get the turf in shape for the summer. As I have mentioned on other occasions a good lawn is the foundation for your whole scheme of landscape improvement about your home. If you have a few trees and a nice lawn you are well on the road to beautiful home surroundings. Of course a little shrubbery around your house foundation and in one or two borders at the sides of the lawn helps a lot but a good velvety lawn is most important.

Now is the time in many parts of the country to fill any depressions in the lawn with fine, rich loam and set new grass or sow lawn grass seed. It is also time to apply fertilizer to lawns in many sections. The application of rough manure to a lawn is not a good practice but old decayed manure may be used. The manure should be so fine that it will sift right down to the roots of the grass. One objection to the use of manure is that it contains so many weed seeds.

Any good mixed fertilizer may be used on lawns but must be used carefully and not too much applied at one time. Equal parts by weight of bone meal and cottonseed meal may be mixed together and applied at the rate of 2 1/2 or 3 pounds per 100 square feet of lawn. You can scatter the fertilizer more uniformly if you will first mix it with several times its bulk of fine soil or sand.

One point for you to remember when renovating your lawn is to save all of the grass that you can and add to it by setting additional plants or seeding grass. Moss growing on the lawn generally indicates need of fertilizer. Many persons get the idea that the presence of moss indicates a sour soil and need of lime but as a rule if you fertilize the soil and sow some grass seed the moss will disappear and you will get a good stand of grass. Don't be afraid to use plenty of grass seed, say a pound for every 500 square feet of new lawn or about half that amount for patching up an old lawn.

Perhaps you might like a copy of our new Farmer's Bulletin No. 1677 on the Planting and Care of Lawns. We'll be glad to send you a copy. Just send the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., a postcard, with your name and address very plainly written upon it, and the words LAWN BULLETIN -- that's all.